



News Release

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SBA Announces Winners of Lean for Main Street Training Challenge

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) today announced the winners of the “Lean for Main Street Training Challenge” competition. The training challenge is designed to give representatives from SBA’s resource partner network – Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), SCORE chapters, Women’s Business Centers (WBCs), and Veteran Business Outreach Centers (VBOCs) – the opportunity to adapt an existing curriculum to help Main Street small businesses and entrepreneurs utilize the insights of lean business methodologies.

Lean methodology has been long popular in technology start-ups, driving companies to move away from a traditional business plan to a more simplified, step-by-step approach. It involves a cycle of consumer feedback and adaption to quickly take products to market. The SBA has a national network of resource partners who are uniquely well positioned to make the most cutting edge tools accessible to new businesses in all corners of the country.

“The lean start-up approach has the potential to empower entrepreneurs well beyond Silicon Valley and traditional tech hubs,” said SBA Administrator Maria Contreras-Sweet. “The lean methodology is focused on helping entrepreneurs get the right things to the right place at the right time, while minimizing waste and maintaining flexibility. Through a partnership with the National Science Foundation’s I-Corps program, we are training and building the capacity of five of those organizations to become experts in I-Corps instruction, and we’ll work closely with them as they adapt and deliver new variations of the program to targeted audiences in their regions.”

I-Corps, the curriculum developed by the National Science Foundation (NSF), provides a framework of principles and practices challenging conventional notions about business model planning.

The winning resource partners will attend NSF’s I-Corps program in Washington, D.C. this spring, where they will receive guidance from instructors on how to adapt the curriculum to their own communities. Throughout the learning cycle, they will work with I-Corps master trainers to observe, reflect, and adapt the current curriculum for use in their centers, and in counseling their local area businesses.

The winners are as follows:

- **Community Business Partnership (SBDC)** – Springfield, Va.
- **McLennan SBDC** – Waco, Texas
- **Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center (WBC)** – San Francisco, Calif.
- **University of Pittsburgh (SBDC)** – Pittsburgh, Pa.

- **Mississippi State University (VBOC)** – Mississippi State, Miss.

Each winning center will also receive \$25,000 in prize money to support travel expenses associated with the I-Corps program, the adaptation and development of a new curriculum, and the delivery of that curriculum in their local communities. The SBA plans to leverage these adapted curricula by making them available to all members of the SBA's resource partner network.

The five winning contestants represent a geographically diverse group. Applicants aimed their proposed curricula at a number of different audiences, including disadvantaged Main Street districts, and women from minority and immigrant communities.

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